



## How to Get an Industry Job Interview?

If you have googled that question then you have seen the never-ending sea of related advice. Have a stellar cover letter, design an impressive CV, update your LinkedIn profile, consider setting up a personal website, follow up with the hiring manager, choose your words carefully, and the list never ends. We also know that the hiring committee will not spend much time carefully reading application materials, computing points, subtracting one for each typo, or seemingly incorrect use of a comma.

How can you as an applicant strike a balance between caring too much and overlooking the basics? The answer depends on what type of job you are applying to. Keep reading to get an insight into candidate selection from alumni with experience participating in hiring committees in the industry.

### Cover Letter

When applying to an industry position, a cover letter seems to have low value. Are you as shocked as I was? It makes sense that companies reduce the pool of candidates by looking at the CV/Resume first to check for minimum qualifications. So, do hiring committees read the cover letters? It depends from person to person, but in short, not really.

### CV/Resume

Now you know, your resume gets you past the first filter. Invest some time into understanding what the company is looking for and highlight those qualities on your CV. Be sure to use their own language and rearrange sections to fit a particular position. You can follow all the online advice on crafting an effective CV/Resume, but don't bury the keywords the hiring committee is looking to find.

### LinkedIn Profile

A LinkedIn profile is another low-value effort that alone wouldn't do much and

doesn't add much to an already good CV/Resume. It may hold value long-term so consider having an updated one, after all, it's not a time-consuming task.

## Referrals

Am I about to tell you that networking is important? yes, you know me so well. The stories in these newsletters speak for themselves. It all boils down to hiring committees wanting to ensure the success of the hired candidate. When someone or something offers a vote of confidence, it adds to the probability that hiring that particular candidate will prove to be a good decision long-term. The value of the referral is proportional to how much the hiring committee values its source. The quality of the referral depends on your professional relationship with your network.

I hope you find this information helpful. Keep in mind that when applying to a startup you might need to invest more time into convincing the hiring committee you are the right person for the job. Natis Shafiq is sharing his story in this newsletter and describes what working for a startup looks like. Read the story to understand what startups find valuable.

I would like to thank the following alumni for contributing to this short article: Archana Venugopal (Texas Instruments), Adrian Avendano (Ares Materials Inc), and Rohit Galatage (Intel Corporation).

Look out for the next newsletter if you are interested in how to get an academic job interview.

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# Adaptive Mindset for Success

## Natis Shafiq, PhD

Lithography Process  
Development Engineer  
Metamaterial Technologies Inc.



I am from Bangladesh, where I completed my BS in Mechanical Engineering. Afterward, I completed my MS at Oklahoma State University in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering. During this time, I was introduced to the world of nanostructure fabrication, nanoscale surface modification, and light-matter interaction at nanoscale for sensing application. So, I decided to switch my major and pursue a PhD in Materials Science and Engineering at UT Dallas.

I was very fortunate to work under the supervision of Dr. Yves Chabal in the Laboratory of Surface and Nanostructure Modification (LSNM). My work ranged from studying 2D material, semiconductor, and dielectric surfaces using various in-situ and ex-situ analytical tools, as well as utilizing semiconductor device fabrication tools to demonstrate different design approaches towards building ultrathin quantum dot-Si hybrid solar cells.

I graduated in 2017 and afterward worked as a postdoctoral researcher in a project with Zyvex Labs, LLC. At the end of 2018, I joined my current company, Metamaterial Technologies USA.

## Networking Pays Out

The project with Zyvex Labs, LLC was funded for 1 year. I was fortunate to get some time after my graduation to accelerate networking efforts and apply for jobs online. My current job came through following one of such networking efforts. I found that a company had an exciting opportunity for a process development engineer. **I contacted the person I knew and convinced him to set up an informal conversation.** I briefly explained my interest to join the company and how my skills could benefit that position. The conversation proved to be a success, as I was invited for the 1st round of interviews. Eventually, I moved to the 2nd round and was finally offered the opportunity to join the company.

## Working in a Startup

I joined as a process engineer to develop and expand the company's NanoWeb® product line using their proprietary Rolling Mask Lithography (RML®) tool. I started out by learning the technology, which involved PDMS-based soft lithography mask fabrication, as well as process development/optimization using various lithography tools to print sub  $\mu\text{m}$  nanostructured features on flexible substrates (such as PET). Additionally, my responsibilities include defect reduction, yield enhancement, and quality improvement. One of my major responsibilities is to set up process specifications to achieve production/customer targets.

**Being at a startup, a person must be willing to wear many hats.** The job requires you to be very hands-on and become an expert in utilizing limited resources to achieve company goals. The environment is highly collaborative with most of the members contributing intimately to keep the projects running. However, it is also important to lead projects independently. There are still many ongoing in-house developments and thus, ambiguity is prevalent. Building the problem statements and being adaptive are very important.

There are many opportunities to gain hands-on experience and therefore, very fast growth within the company is also possible. **In the first year, I went through a process of very rapid learning and moved into more of a supervisory type of role within the RML® process development unit.** Currently, my time is spent managing operations in the lab, maintaining production targets as per project requirements, and training/supervising new hires. Also, I frequently interface with vendors/suppliers to set up tool specifications and screen new/exploratory materials. My role has a good balance between being a hands-on technical person and providing opportunities to obtain leadership skills. Overall, the stimulating and collaborative environment suits well with my career outlook.

## **Building a Path for the Future**

I don't have a rigid long-term plan. However, **I have an idea to guide me along the process of career development.** For me, keeping a flexible and adaptive mindset is very important and helps me to be open about exploring interesting new directions in the future.

However, irrespective of any long-term plans, my aim has always remained to learn any technology/discipline from the bottom-up and be as immersive as possible. By gaining hands-on experience and building strong leadership skills, my long-term idea of professional development involves **finding roles that can strike a balance between the technical and business sides of a company.** I would like to be able to interface with customers (internal/external) and use my strength in the technical side to deliver solutions to challenging problems by harnessing a stimulating team environment.

## **The UT Dallas Value**

I have learned many things at UTD and most of the training tremendously helped to build my professional career in one way or another. However, the

most valuable was to develop the ability to conduct very high-quality research and implement deep analytical thinking to solve challenging problems.

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**Thank you, Natis,** for sharing your story with us. We wish you continued success well beyond your expectations.

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